

# HOPE!

The Newsletter of Operation Restore Hope Australia  
website: <https://www.operationrestorehope.org>

Volume 5 Number 3

May 2020



## With your help, we can always provide support!



*Busy day on the wards during Mission 2019*

**Operation Restore Hope Australia's annual mission for 2019 took place at the end of June 2019 subsequent to last year's newsletter. The mission was a success with 42 patients receiving surgical and dental treatment. We have had a 98% patient return rate at our follow-up clinics.**

The reason we have such a high ongoing follow-up rate for our patients is due to the involvement of our colleagues in the Philippines.



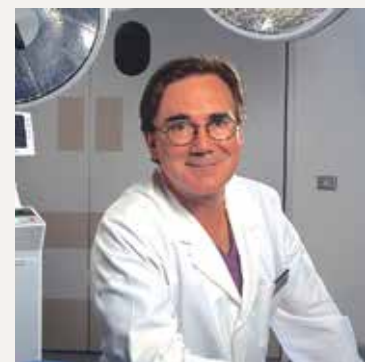
*Volunteer surgeons Gerald Abesamis and Sandee Tan and their families*

We have been blessed to have the plastic surgery residents of University of the Philippines, Philippine General Hospital (UP/PGH) work with us coordinated by our partner, Ugnayan ng Pahinungod, the charity arm of UP/PGH led by plastic surgeon Dr Eric Talens.

In fact, two plastic surgeons who have completed their residency and are full fledged plastic surgeons, Sandee Tan and Gerald Abesamis, have continued to volunteer to run our follow up and screening clinics, along with Jonas Bico.

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### *A Letter from Dr Hodgkinson*



#### **News from ORHA founder Dr Darryl Hodgkinson:**

It was with a heavy heart that ORHA had to cancel its 2020 mission. Our partner Filipino plastic surgeons did an admirable job pre-screening patients. Nearly 100 cases had been reviewed and almost 50 already cleared for surgery.

All our overseas volunteers are still poised and planning to return to Manila as soon as it is practical to resume surgery to operate on these children with cleft lip and palate.

We feel your pain and stress during such a difficult time with this COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Peter Hodgkinson, who was so looking forward to bringing his cleft team to Las Piñas is also unable to perform cleft surgery in Newcastle on Tyne in the UK. Our support has not waned, however, and we have been able to supply PPE to all three of our partner programs.

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## With your help, we can always provide support

(continued from page 1)

In February 2020, Drs Tan, Abesamis and Bico with the help of our other on the ground volunteers including nurse Rose Junio held a pre-screening and follow-up clinic in preparation for our mission which was to be held in May.

With nearly 100 registered patients and nearly 50 already cleared for surgery, the team was ready to go! Sadly, with the advent of COVID-19 not only has international travel been curtailed but also carrying out of non-essential surgery.

### Only one previous postponement

This is only the second time in the now 27 years history of Operation Restore Hope that we have had to postpone a mission. The other time was in 2013 after super-typhoon Haiyan (known in the Philippines as super-typhoon Yolanda) when so many hospitals and health care facilities were destroyed.

There were an unimaginable number of trauma patients with injuries from the typhoon and all medical aid had to be directed toward relief efforts. Then, as now, ORHA tried to play a role in our communities by providing medical supplies where possible.

### PPE: Nurses told "Make your own"

We have just delivered 200 units of PPE (personal protective equipment) in the form high quality reusable face shields imported from the USA to assist our Filipino volunteers, team members and partners. We were told that the nurses in some hospitals were being told to "make their own" as the death rate amongst healthcare workers at every level is rising.

### "They are not forgotten"

It's really important to have those who work with us as well as our patients realise that even in these dark times we have not forgotten them.

# The Rewards in Helping Children with Severe Birth Defects and Deformities



Screening for Children with Severe Birth Defects and Deformities

**Operation Restore Hope Australia is now in its 13th year of partnership with the Mijares Gurango Craniofacial Foundation (MGCF) led by Dr Taps Gurango working at the Philippine Children's Medical Center to care for children with severe clefts and craniofacial disorders.**

In the charity's first 14 years, these children would present at missions

but we were unable to help them as they required ongoing surgical care, hospitalisation and follow-up. Imagine the heartbreak of the most needy being turned away and the sadness of volunteers not being able to help them.

### Nearly 150 patients in program

Thirteen years on, we have had nearly 150 patients through the



## Krenz

Krenz first came to us in 2011 as a young teenager with hemifacial atrophy. He was severely bullied and isolated in school and in his community.

Krenz had several surgeries and gained confidence both in school and in his new found passion of hip hop dancing.

Now Krenz is not only fully employed, but is married and has a beautiful son who loves to dance like his father. Krenz keeps in constant touch with Operation Restore Hope and has become a much loved member of our charity "family".

Top: Krenz in 2011

Bottom: In 2019 with the Hodgkinsons



program, some having had multiple surgeries. Over this time, we have seen these children if provided not only their surgeries but ongoing treatment and follow up are able to go to school, find jobs and enjoy a greater quality of life.

The courage to claim their place in society

Even though the hurdles these children and their families face and the amount of medical attention they require is greater than our

children in the missions with cleft lip and palate, we have seen that with medical intervention as well as functional and emotional support these children can summon the courage to claim their place in society.

Here are a just a few of our recent updates from children who are fighting to overcome these obstacles:

## Amethyst & Sai Sai



Amethyst and Sai Sai are now entering their sixth year of sponsorship. Both these little girls have oromandibular hypogenesis syndrome, meaning that they were born not only with incomplete arms and legs but also with incomplete sealed jaws. The condition is very rare, so it is unusual

to have two little girls not too far apart in age in one program.

Having one another and meeting and sharing experiences for them and their families at Operation Restore Hope screenings and clinics has given them a small but mighty support group.

The girls will continue to require support as they grow. They need to have their prosthetic legs updated regularly and will have to continue to conquer special medical needs around breathing, feeding and the development of their mandibular area as well as their gross and fine motor skills. What is most gratifying is that both girls are in school, socialising and age appropriate or better in literacy and numeracy.

## Working not only in the community but with the community



Director Ben Mead with members of the Las Piñas City Government

Operation Restore Hope Australia has always had the ethos of standing shoulder to shoulder with our Filipino colleagues, and not flying in to carry out missions and flying out not knowing if our patients required follow-up, or how their surgical results held up months and years afterward.

### Long term commitments

For this reason, ORHA has made long term commitments to the communities in which it has worked and has reached out to the local government agencies so that we can coordinate efforts to do the greatest good possible with every resource and opportunity.

### Official Support makes the difference

We are very pleased to have the official support of the Las Piñas City Government. Working together, we are getting the word about cleft care and our cleft clinics out into the community, by distributing posters and flyers to the barangay offices, health centers, day care centers, women's livelihood centers and public schools.

## Zyries



Zyries came to us from the provinces (aka countryside) in 2018. She came with her Aunt, a young woman who had given up her own education and work to take care of Zyries when her brother's wife left him after Zyries was born with a naso-frontal meningocele.

She was loved by her father and aunt but their love could not stop the anguish Zyries felt outside the home. She had stopped going to school and was frightened to leave the house as the other children in the village would run after her and throw things at her while screaming "Monster, Monster".

Luckily, Zyries was fit and well when she and her aunt arrived from the provinces and was able to be scheduled for surgery. Since her surgery, she has also been fitted with eyeglasses, all sponsored by ORHA via the Foundation.

The last time we saw Zyries, she spotted us first and went flying to Dr Hodgkinson's arms with the biggest hug. She is back in school, performing well and now physically and emotionally strong.

# Providing Equipment and Supplies to Our Partners



*(continued from front page)*

This past year we have continued to support challenging craniofacial cases led by Dr Taps Gurango at the Philippine Children's Medical Center as well as supply high tech equipment including high speed drills and saws and a craniotome so that in the future they do not have to rely on the rental of this vital equipment.

We pray that the lives of those less fortunate in the Philippines will soon improve and the pandemic will ease so that we may fully continue the work of Operation Restore Hope Australia.



ORHA sent personal protective equipment (PPE) to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Operation Restore Hope Australia has three major branches to its operations:

- Missions in which Australian and foreign surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses as well as administrators collaborate with our Filipino counterparts to needy areas to carry out cleft lip and palate surgeries
- Collaboration with the Mijares Gurango Craniofacial Foundation to provide the surgery and care

needs for children with severe cleft and craniofacial deformities

- Providing equipment and supplies to help our partners help not only ORHA's little patients but support other medical charitable outreach in the Philippines.

Throughout the year, ORHA takes donations of functional medical equipment and in date or sterilisable medical supplies and ships them to the Philippines for use in charity and areas of need.

### A whole range of equipment

In the past few years we have shipped hospital beds to a remote island hospital where our partners were holding missions, anaesthetic machines to burns and cleft units, donated medical supplies and now personal protective equipment (PPE) to hopefully help keep our volunteers, partners and colleagues safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Donated equipment shipped to the Philippines

## A Special Thanks to Our Sponsors



The Mill House Foundation

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The cost to Operation Restore Hope Australia to repair a facial cleft is approximately \$500 AUD per operation. The more donations we receive, the more children we can help.

No funds received are spent on administrative, accounting, advertising or infrastructure costs. All membership fees and donations are spent directly on surgeries performed.

You can also become a Life Member of Operation Restore Hope Australia or just join for a year. Your fee or donation will help fund the cost of a child's surgery.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Donations over \$2.00 are fully tax deductible and are payable to "Operation Restore Hope Philippines Relief Fund"

I wish to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships are not tax deductible and are payable to 'Operation Restore Hope Australia'

Enclosed is my \$100 Lifetime Membership fee

Enclosed is my \$20 Annual Membership fee

TOTAL PAYMENT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Method of Payment:

Cheque enclosed  MasterCard  Visa

Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_